WHERE TO FIND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY? SPATIALITY IN JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S COUNTER TO GREEK PAIDEIA

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Abstract

This article examines the use of the concept *philosophia* in writings and homilies of John Chrysostom. Although Chrysostom in his discussion of intellectual achievements draws on a long-standing tradition of Christian apologetics he lends a new direction to the debate by highlighting the spatiality of philosophy. He not only counters Hellenic *paideia* with Christian wisdom, but locates these two types of philosophy in the city and the countryside, respectively. The article argues that the spatial dimension is vital to Chrysostom's view of philosophy as he aims to extend the rural ideal of asceticism to the polis to create a healthy Christian community within the city.

PHILOSOPHIES AND SPACES

"Therefore, I beseech you let us introduce the philosophy from there also here, so that the cities become cities indeed. That is also able to improve the Greek, and to free him from countless offences."[1] In the conclusion to one of his homilies on Romans John Chrysostom imagines an apologetic argument with a pagan Greek opponent over whether it is possible to live a life according to God's commands. What is striking in this passage, which brings together a number of main concerns in the preacher's thinking, is the juxtaposition of intellectual activities with physical spaces or, more precisely, locations opposed to each other by spatial deixis. Apparently, he assigns a certain intellectual pursuit to a sphere outside his flock's living environment, namely the desert, and opposes it to subtle Hellenic reasoning, which proves futile in the face of evidence for the true Christian life. What is more,

Chrysostom seems to pursue two different goals at one stroke: on the one hand, he is engaged in an apologetic struggle against educated Greek opponents, who call into question the existence of true followers of Christ in their days. On the other hand, the homily is meant to reassure the members of the congregation that there are in fact men who practise what Christ taught. However, the faithful life, as it happens, is only to be found in the desert and the mountains, and Chrysostom evidently anticipates his listeners' reluctance to forsake the amenities of the city to join the ascetic monks.

At first glance, Chrysostom's line of argument may seem just another contribution to the long-standing debate over classical *paideia* and Christian faith.[2] Since he wants to prove the superiority of Christianity over Greek intellectualism he follows in the footsteps of earlier apologetic literature. Champions of a Christian faith that could be explained by rational arguments, such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, already had made the case for an assimilation of classical learning as propaedeutic and shown that Christianity truly fulfilled what Greek philosophers only promised.[3] Their very writings bore witness to the fact that Christians were capable of arguing to high intellectual standards and that faith was compatible with philosophy. By contrast, other Church Fathers and also the emerging ascetic movement laid claim to superiority over pagan *paideia* without any need of formal education. They emphasised that, in the tradition of the New Testament's simple fishermen and tentmakers, it was not necessary to command rhetorical and philosophical skills, even though they put forward their views with the help of the very same skills. The seminal text of ascetic hagiography, Athanasius's *Life of Antony*, had its protagonist utterly defeating the pagan philosophers, locating the deeper wisdom of the Christian in the remote desert, as Chrysostom does.[4] We might wonder, then, why the Antiochene priest draws on this discourse before his congregation and, further, why he makes much of the dichotomy of spaces in relation to philosophical activity. An indication of the relevance of the spatial dimension is provided by the quotation's bold claim that a translocation of philosophy will at once refute pagan critics

and bring the city to its fulfilment.[5] Yet, in what ways can philosophy be the key to the polis's achieving its full potential? Chrysostom in this homily remains strikingly silent on that point.

Although proposing the use of rhetoric and *paideia* for Christian ends elsewhere, Chrysostom in the homily on Romans goes to great lengths to insist on the yawning gap between Greek reasoning and Christian faith. That may seem surprising if we bear in mind not only the presence of well-educated citizens among his urban audience, both in Antioch and Constantinople, but also the fact that Chrysostom is credited with having coined the expression 'Christian philosophy', which unmistakeably betrays its close relation to Greek intellectualism.[6] Since his homily on the festival of the Kalends is in general concerned with positioning Christianity as a distinctive way of life, it stresses the practical component of 'philosophy' or, to put it differently, habits and customs with religious significance. At the same time, however, Chrysostom makes plain that to philosophise in the Christian manner also means to achieve an accurate understanding of Christian belief and to instruct others on ethics. It is therefore closely tied to cognition and intellectual activity.[7] Although in using the term *philosophia* he stands in a longer tradition of Christians engaging with the classical heritage, he is the first author whose works attest the juxtaposition of the term with the attribute 'Christian'.[8] This would seem to indicate that early Christianity was indebted to the realm of Socrates and Plato.

Chrysostom's fraught relationship to Hellenic education, it is true, has not gone unnoticed in patristic scholarship. Studies have focused on his exploitation of rhetorical techniques[9] and examined to what extent his ethics and anthropology draw on classical philosophy, particularly of Stoic provenance.[10] His critical engagement with the *paideia* of the pagan elite has also attracted considerable interest. Tloka, with a focus on rhetoric, argues that Chrysostom legitimises a Christian use of classical oratory in functional terms and thereby justifies the place of intellectual abilities within the Church.[11] Recently Laird in his study of Chrysostom's anthropology has likewise emphasised that the Church Father's education in

Greek *paideia* was the basis of his intellectual framework; and Rylaarsdam has highlighted how Chrysostom's pedagogy amalgamates classical culture into the Christian framework.[12] In addition, Shepardson's monograph on Chrysostom's politics of space in Antioch sheds light on the ways in which he manipulates the spatial order to make the case for Christian orthodoxy and orthopraxy; in particular, Shepardson argues that the preacher inverts the traditional hierarchy between the city and the countryside so that rural Christians become a cipher through which he can challenge his urban audience on their cultural values.[13] What she does not fully take into account is that Chrysostom's spatial discourse on philosophy, as seen above, targets both his flock and pagan opponents. In the light of these studies, the present article intends to explore why he foregrounds the spatial divide with regard to culture, given that texts such as the *Life of Antony* had already situated Christian wisdom in a specific environment. It intends to go beyond Shepardson's findings by showing that Chrysostom aims at not so much an inversion of normative geography as an extension of a characteristically rural way of life to the city. To address this topic, the article will first consider Chrysostom's personal experience of the urban-rural divide. The main part of the discussion then demonstrates that his concept of philosophy centres upon the way of life rather than intellectual achievement and is profoundly shaped by a systematic dichotomy, which manifests itself in the spatial opposition between the Greek polis and the rural surroundings. Finally, it will be argued that the preacher invests the concept of Christian philosophy with spatial qualities to make the monastic ideal available to his urban congregation.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE LOCAL SETTING TO CHRYSOSTOM'S LIFE AND THINKING

Like any other eminent Church Father of his times, Chrysostom was well placed to consider the difference between established knowledge and Christian wisdom since he had become

thoroughly acquainted with both during his life. Born into a family of the upper class in Syrian Antioch, Chrysostom received the traditional schooling, which would provide him, like any ambitious young man, with the knowledge and skills necessary to embark on a rewarding public career.[14] He probably attended the school of the accomplished rhetorician Libanius for some years, where he will have acquired all the rhetorical techniques that would enable him to sway whatever audience he chose.[15] Yet, instead of aspiring to a career in the imperial administration or the military, he bade farewell to secular education, under the influence of his mother Anthusa, who seems to have been a devout Christian. At some stage of his youth he joined the *asketerion* of Diodorus, not a religious school in the strict sense but rather a circle of young believers who shared their life and studies under the supervision of clerical teachers. However, not completely satisfied with this departure from traditional society and its values, Chrysostom fled further from the city to the surrounding mountains, where he sought spiritual consummation in the company of ascetic monks.[16] After some years of monastic experience and due to damaged health, he returned to the bustling city and its life, to become a priest and preach to the leading congregation in Antioch.[17]

The impact of his early years is recognisable throughout Chrysostom's homilies and writings, as tensions abound between his ideal, the ascetic life of the hermits, and the urban way of life. What is important in our context is that he experienced different forms of teaching and learning and had the opportunity to recognise the interdependence between education and way of life or rather its locales. This personal experience left a deep mark even on his intellectual profile, as he addressed educational matters in a number of his works, especially those originating in his early career; there he betrays a constant wavering between promoting the monastic existence and acknowledging the interests of educated and well-to-do families.[18] He not only tackled this tension in his *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life*, the letters to his friend Theodore and several homilies, but is also credited with being the first Christian

author to devote an entire treatise to children's upbringing, *On Vainglory or the Education of Children*.[19]

It can be argued that the way Chrysostom became familiar with different approaches to pedagogy informed his views on education to a considerable extent. When we look more closely at his comments on teaching and knowledge, it instantly catches the eye how frequently he makes use of spatial terms denoting internal and external spaces. Certainly, mapping the intellectual domain in these categories had a long-standing tradition in Greek thinking, since Plato and Aristotle had drawn a distinction between teaching to a small group of followers and disseminating knowledge through lectures or written dialogues to a wider audience. Yet while Aristotle employed only the adjective 'exoteric',[20] it was, as far as we can discern, not until the second-century satirical writer Lucian applied the term to the Peripatetics that the adjective 'esoteric' gained currency with regard to teaching and knowledge.[21] Soon Christians adopted this linguistic practice and identified traditional philosophical schools through the spatial distinction between 'inside' and 'outside'.[22]

However, this opposition also drew on a second, distinctively Jewish-Christian, tradition, as the adherents of Christ since New Testament times had been accustomed to distance themselves from other religious groups by referring to them as 'external' or 'those outside'.[23] Subsequently the discourse of knowledge and that of religion acquired a connection in Christian thinking, to the effect that there was a practical linguistic expression for addressing differences between 'them', the pagans, and 'us', the believers.[24] Chrysostom could rely on this entrenched habit when he referred to "outside education" (*exothen paideusis*), "outside philosophy" (*exothen sophia*) and "outside philosophers" (*exothen philosophoi*).[25]

Interestingly, Chrysostom hardly ever uses the Greek word for exact knowledge and science, *episteme*, in this context. Nor does he reflect often on knowledge in the strict sense, as imparted by the schools. He rarely goes into details of the philosophical sects or teachings of individual philosophers.[26] Whenever he does talk about formal Greek education, negative

remarks outnumber the positive ones by far.[27] Another established knowledge term, however, figures prominently in his discussions: *philosophia*, linked to wisdom and truth, is of paramount importance to, albeit not reserved for, Chrysostom's conception of Christian religion.[28] To be sure, he applies the word and its cognates also to traditional philosophy and its key figures. Among the Greek intellectuals he includes not only the ancient philosophers such as Plato but also contemporary ones without famous names, which were a staple feature of Hellenic culture at that time.[29] He also distinguishes several disciplines of formal education by name, including astrology, mathematics, geometry and arithmetic.[30]

However, Chrysostom's genuine interest is in a different branch of philosophy. Tellingly, he talks about the "real philosophy" (*ontos sophia*) or even "our philosophy" (*hemetera philosophia*) and the wisdom "above", in a move to appropriate the venerable term for the followers of Christ.[31] As noted already, he goes so far as to coin the expression "Christian philosophy", thereby claiming that this activity greatly differs from its pagan counterpart. All these qualifying attributes suggest that Chrysostom conceived of the philosophical domain as structured by a fundamental antagonism between two sets of practices, one of which is located 'outside' and separated from Christians, while the other belongs to 'us'. Following his spatial dichotomy, the next section shall outline the profiles of the two in order to illuminate the distinctiveness of Christian philosophy.

THE DEMARCATION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL FIELD

Considering Chrysostom's predilection for visual terms and imagery, it comes as no surprise that he does not stop with the metaphorical meaning of spatial terms noted above. He seizes any opportunity to flesh out the contrast between the two philosophies with references to actual spaces. On one occasion, when he set out to teach his congregation the superiority of the heavenly goods, the service in the church of Antioch was attended not only by the members of his flock but also by some peasants from the Syrian countryside.[32] Whether

Chrysostom had anticipated this cross-cultural encounter or alertly adapted his homily on the spot, right from the start he phrased his instructions about Christian conduct in light of the gathering of urban and rural audiences:[33]

> Since the people who have this day streamed into our assembly from the country have made our gathering more brilliant, let us in return set before them a richer spiritual banquet filled with the same great love they have shown for us. [. . .] Let us not look to the fact that their speech is different from ours. Let us note carefully the true doctrine of their soul and not their barbarous tongue. Let us learn the intention of their heart and that they prove in deeds the things we, in our love of true doctrine, strive to teach by words. For they fulfil in deeds the precept of the Apostle, who bids us to get our daily bread by working with our hands.

It is evident that Chrysostom in this opening of the baptismal instruction is extolling the virtues of the Syrian visitors as an excellent model of the blameless life, which his parishioners, even though they hail from a different cultural background, should emulate in the urban context of Antioch. The recurring use of the term 'philosophy', applied to the country folk and hammering the preacher's lesson home to his audience, serves as a constant reminder of the ideal that ought to govern their lives. There is more to this passage than the presentation of an excellent role model, however. By elaborating on the contrast between the Syrians' activities in the countryside and the habits common in the cityscape, Chrysostom prepares the ground for a comparison which helps to bring out the nature of his model. As anticipated by the constant reference to the key term *philosophia*, the inhabitants of the rural landscape are opposed to the philosophers, who seem merely to sport impressive beards and staves but fail to gain insight into the metaphysical realm.[34]

It is not by chance that Chrysostom picks out intellectuals whose profession is recognisable from their eye-catching props. These representatives of traditional philosophy

are staple figures in his sermons and writings, a stereotype that points to a social group rather than identifiable individuals. In several of his texts we encounter these characters, whose main properties appear to be the beard, the staff and the cloak.[35] Needless to say, with this malicious mockery Chrysostom draws on the traditional satire on intellectuals that is familiar from the attacks of the second-century writer Lucian.[36] The philosophers, who seek to affirm their commitment to their profession through their outward appearance, are prime examples of the urban mode of life. Obsessed with external splendour and striving for recognition from their fellow citizens, they live a life of *phantasia*, that is, vainglory and pretentiousness without substance.[37]

Given that countless ancient philosophers decried the excesses of upper-class materialism, it is striking that Chrysostom links the intellectuals to city life, which is centred upon possessions, status symbols and ostentation. Repeatedly he insinuates a close association between the urban elite, with their fixation on wealth, clothes, crowds of slaves and reputation, and the representatives of Greek philosophy, to throw light on a shocking discrepancy, the gap between outward splendour and inward inanity.[38] For instance, in one of the *Homilies on the statues* hardly has he contrasted the simple life of the monks with the luxuriousness and sinfulness of the city when he singles out the traditional philosophers as paragons of this corrupted existence.[39] He projects all his vocally expressed prejudices and reservations about the urban sphere onto the group of the intellectuals, so that they epitomise the corruption of the townsfolk.

Particularly in his early writings, when he was still under the spell of his experience as an anchorite, Chrysostom entertained the idea of implementing the monastic life in the urban environment, in the hope of virtually turning the city into a church or monastery.[40] The faith-based life of the monks appeared to him far more conducive to attaining spiritual edification and securing salvation than any effort within the city walls.[41] Unsurprisingly, in his discussion of these opposing ways of life Chrysostom draws our attention to their local setting. Just as

Greek philosophy figures prominently as the hallmark of the city, so the perfect embodiment of Christian virtue is to be found solely in the desert and the mountains.[42] It is not only the Syrian farmers of the baptismal homily who are depicted by him as prime models of the conduct dear to God: rustic monks, dwelling in the adjacent mountains, fit the picture too.[43] Similarly to his portrayal of the philosophers, Chrysostom has a rough mental sketch of rustic life, which he applies to both the Syrians and the hermits. Both make only rare appearances in the cityscape, above all when an emergency or imminent danger arises, as was the case during the Revolt of the Statues in 387.[44] Otherwise they avoid direct contact with the corrupting habits of the townspeople. The whole life of the peasants and the monks is a far cry from the behaviour and pastimes of the urban population, as the following passage makes clear:[45]

> For I think the present day to be a very great festival indeed on account of our brethren, who by their presence beautify our city and adorn the Church; a people foreign to us in language, but in harmony with us concerning the faith, a people passing their time in tranquillity, and leading an honest and sober life. For among these men there are no spectacles of iniquity—no horse races, nor harlots, nor any of that riot which pertains to a city, but every kind of licentiousness is banished and great sobriety flourishes everywhere. And the reason is that their life is a laborious one; and they have, in the culture of the soil, a school of virtue and sobriety and follow that art which God introduced before all others into our life. For before the sin of Adam, when he enjoyed much freedom, a certain tillage of the ground was enjoined upon him; not indeed a laborious or a troublesome one, but one which afforded him much good discipline, for he was appointed, it is said, "to till the garden, and to keep it." Each of these men you may see at one time employed in yoking the labouring oxen, guiding the plough and cutting the deep furrow; and at another ascending the sacred pulpit and cultivating the souls of those under their

> authority; at one time cutting away the thorns from the soil with a bill-hook, at another purging out the sins of the soul by the Word. For they are not ashamed of work like the inhabitants of our city, but they are ashamed of idleness, knowing that this has taught every kind of wickedness; and that to those who love it, it has proved a teacher of iniquity from the beginning.

In order to exhort his congregation to a wholesale rethink of their habits during an existential crisis in Antioch, the preacher sets before their eyes an image of a completely different way of life far removed from their own. While the citizens indulge in theatre spectacles, visits to brothels and every kind of sinful leisure, the men from the countryside are used to labouring with their own hands. With much toil and sweat, they themselves cultivate the fields and perform any task necessary in agriculture, instead of assigning menial jobs to servants as the inhabitants of the city are accustomed to do.[46] Contrary to the framework of elite values, rustic simplicity in Chrysostom's thinking is evaluated in a positive way; by his vivid description he brings the metaphor of *agroikia*, rusticity or boorishness, back to life and re-values it.[47] More importantly, the Syrian country people not only differ from the city dwellers by their devotion to physical labour: they also excel at praising God with psalmody and disseminating Christian belief with words. These activities stand in stark contrast to the urban philosophers, who usually utter pointless arguments.

Yet the import of the passage quoted above emerges only from its Biblical reference.[48] Firstly, Chrysostom makes the point that the country folk actually lead a life according to nature, such as the Greek philosophers had long promoted but blatantly failed to practice. With their simple food, absence of any social hierarchy and equal distribution of possessions, the country people embody the primordial form of life, which is contrasted with the depravation so pervasive in the city. Secondly, the peasants resemble the first farmer of mankind, Adam. Elsewhere Chrysostom claims that the monks in their frugal and modest life emulate the angels.[49] To put it differently, this wholesome conduct—contrary to urban life—

is a genuinely Christian one. And thirdly, the peasants' occupations and virtues foreshadow the return of Paradise, a step towards alleviating the Fall. While the preacher implicitly draws also on the romanticising notion of the Golden Age familiar to the educated among his parishioners, at the same time he gives this common motif a distinctively Christian stamp.

This opposition of spaces, urban and rural, is only one step, and not even the most important one, in a wider agenda. What is worth mentioning here is that spatial categories serve the aim of visualising contrasting life choices and so make the argument more powerful. It is these different attitudes to human existence that are Chrysostom's core interest. At the heart of the matter lies the fundamental opposition between theory and practice. This issue is given particular prominence in a passage from a sermon on the gospel of John, in which Chrysostom elaborates on the difference between Christian faith and Hellenic philosophy:[50]

> A great blessing then is faith when it arises from glowing feelings, great love, and a fervent soul; it makes us truly wise, it hides our human meanness, and leaving reasoning beneath, it philosophises about things in heaven; or rather what the wisdom of men cannot discover it abundantly comprehends and succeeds in. Let us then cling to this and not commit to reasoning what concerns ourselves. For tell me, why have not the Greeks been able to find out anything? Did they not know all the outward [pagan] wisdom? Why then could they not prevail against fishermen and tentmakers, and unlearned persons? Was it not because the one committed all to argument, the others to faith? And so these last were victorious over Plato and Pythagoras, in short, over all that had gone astray; and they surpass those whose lives had been worn out in astrology and geometry, mathematics and arithmetic, and who had been thoroughly instructed in every sort of learning, and were as much superior to them as true and real philosophers are superior to those who are by nature foolish and out of their senses. For observe, these men asserted that the soul

> was immortal, or rather, they did not merely assert this but persuaded others of it. The Greeks, on the contrary, did not at first know what manner of thing the soul was, and when they had found out and had distinguished it from the body they were again in the same case, the one asserting that it was incorporeal, the other that it was corporeal and was dissolved with the body. Concerning heaven again, the one said that it had life and was a god, but the fishermen both taught and persuaded that it was the work and device of God.

Again, in order to cast light on the superiority of faith, the preacher confronts it with its pagan counterpart, which, interestingly, is not defined in religious terms but consists in Greek philosophy. Once more, it is the notion of Christian *philosophia* that suggests this line of comparison. Painting philosophy with a broad brush, Chrysostom captures the essentials of traditional learning, including its champions, Plato and Pythagoras, its branches and core characteristic, the method of reasoning (*logismos*). What interests him most is that this approach to reality is subject to severe limitations and, hence, doomed to fail. Even though erudite Greeks are well versed in every domain of established knowledge, they fall far short of accounting for what is central to human life. The reason is that they are confined to applying the human intellect and its prevalent quality, rationality. With unconcealed *Schadenfreude*, Chrysostom notices that the Greek philosophers, despite their subtle argument, never reached consensus on what is of utmost importance—the human soul and God's creation—, far less persuaded others. Fundamental to this sarcastic depiction is the notion that Hellenic wisdom relies completely on the human faculty of reason instead of recognising man's limited abilities. The failure of traditional philosophy lies in the fact that its approach is immanent in the world here, so it can never reach to the heavenly realm where human life is anchored and finds its ultimate goal.

Christianity, by contrast, is firmly based on faith and so is directly linked to God and, through his revelation, to real wisdom and truth. In a series of rhetorical questions and pointed

antitheses the passage claims that faith surpasses any effort of human rationality and gains insight into the nature of the divine and the world. Since it is grounded in divine truth, as Chrysostom goes on to argue while glossing over fierce dogmatic conflicts of his times, its doctrines are consistent and persuasive throughout.[51] The passage further intimates that rationality and theories are not even important to this kind of wisdom, let alone a precondition for it. In spite of their lack of formal schooling, simple fishermen, tentmakers and the unschooled emerge as the true philosophers. The superiority of their wisdom is manifestly proven, as if they had triumphed in a sophistic contest over Plato and Pythagoras. Similarly, St Paul, after God and Christ the most important teaching authority in Chrysostom's theology, lacks traditional *paideia*, but emerges as the superior philosopher-rhetor, who persuaded far more people than Plato ever did. This suggests that what Chrysostom wants his congregation to imitate goes back beyond the monks of his days to the original Church and Pauline wisdom, whose foundation is divine pedagogy.[52]

While in this passage Chrysostom allows us only a glimpse of what, instead of learning, is needed in addition to faith, he is explicit in the baptismal instruction mentioned above. There the significant distinction between the rustic Christians and the traditional philosophers consists in the commitment of the former to physical labour. They acquire and display virtue, not through learning and teaching, but through agriculture and a frugal life. It needs to be said that the saintly countryfolk occasionally ascend the pulpit to teach their fellow folk; likewise, they regularly practise psalmody. However, Chrysostom leaves no doubt that their core business is deeds, to the extent that words are unnecessary for teaching.[53] It is by their actions, their *vita activa*, that they abide by the rules given by Paul and follow in the footsteps of angels. Furthermore, in agreement with Jesus' Sermon on the Mount[54] the farmers not only practise the blameless life but also encourage others to emulate them. The supremacy of the practice of virtue over the philosophers' *vita contemplativa* is thrown into high relief in the

nineteenth *Homily on the statues,* in a passage that repeatedly associates pagan intellectualism with the sphere 'outside':[55]

> For among these men [. . .] great sobriety flourishes everywhere. And the reason is that their life is a laborious one; and they have, in the culture of the soil, a school of virtue and sobriety and follow that art which God introduced before all others into our life. [. . .] Each of these men you may see at one time employed in yoking the labouring oxen, guiding the plough and cutting the deep furrow; and at another ascending the sacred pulpit and cultivating the souls of those under their authority; at one time cutting away the thorns from the soil with a bill-hook, at another purging out the sins of the soul by the Word. [. . .] These are our philosophers and theirs the best philosophy, exhibiting their virtue not by their outward appearance but by their mind. The pagan (*exothen*) philosophers are in character no wise better than those who are engaged on the stage and in the sports of actors; and they have nothing to show beyond the threadbare cloak, the beard and the long robe! But these, quite on the contrary, bidding farewell to staff and beard and the other accoutrements, have their souls adorned with the doctrines of the true philosophy, and not only with the doctrines, but also with the real practice. [. . .] And not only is this to be wondered at, but that they confirm the credibility of these doctrines by their actions.

Labouring with one's own hands is valued as a kind of professional activity or "art" (*techne*) so that it ranks among other honourable pursuits; it even functions as a school of virtue and a proof of Christian doctrines, thereby replacing the established schools and their ineffective curriculum.[56] The rural way of life, as it happens, embodies the perfect harmony of words and deeds, or doctrines and practice, with words subservient to practice. Chrysostom aims to tailor a new robe for knowledge and philosophy: whilst the Greek philosophers miserably fail to

translate theory into practice, Christian sages, without any formal training, bring virtue to fruition and, simultaneously, attain mastery of all relevant knowledge. This feat again links Chrysostom's rural Christians with Paul because his main means of persuasion lies in his character, in particular in the virtue of humility and the imitation of Christ, instead of classical rhetoric.[57]

The passages discussed so far are indicative of another fundamental opposition, which is inextricably connected to that between theory and practice. When Chrysostom insists on physical labour as opposed to the vainglorious and leisured life of the urban elite, he does so, for one thing, to lay stress on the peculiar quality of Christian *philosophia*. Further, he implies a social distinction, that of exclusivity versus inclusiveness. In this regard, it is telling that he is eager to associate the Greek philosophers with the pursuits and habits of the urban upper class: the inclusion of intellectuals among the affluent citizenry points to the fact that traditional schooling in antiquity required a substantial amount of time and money. Only the well-to-do could afford a lifestyle that provided them with sufficient spare time to dedicate themselves to intellectual pursuits such as philosophy, rhetoric, mathematics and music.[58] Even more strikingly, to devote one's whole life to studies, as for instance Plato had done, was an option open only to those few who luckily felt no need to earn any money at all. Apart from these happy few, whoever attended the traditional schools in late antiquity nourished the hope of embarking on a profitable career, whether as an advocate, an official in the administration or a high-ranking officer. These aspirations of the urban elite are vigorously attacked by Chrysostom in his treatise *On Vainglory*, contrasting them with the care for the soul.[59] Within the schools themselves, another social hierarchy cements the elitist character of Greek teaching. Since traditional philosophy is based on formal logic and argumentation—in the same way as rhetoric depends on the mastery of formalised techniques—there is an assignment of social roles to experts or authorities on the one hand and neophytes on the other, who have yet to complete their skills. It is this hierarchy of knowledge that attracts

Chrysostom's fierce criticism in a homily on the gospel of Matthew, where he dismisses the Pharisees and rabbis in all their elitism and boastfulness as a teaching authority alien to Christian religion.[60] We can surmise that he had the same misgivings about the 'masters' of the Greek schools.

In the same passage, which intends to promote the Christian virtue of humility against arrogance, the preacher draws an idealised picture of equal opportunity as implemented by Christianity. There we encounter the motifs familiar from the sermons discussed above.[61] In stark contrast to the exclusivity of pagan philosophy, admission to Christian wisdom requires just one ticket: faith. Wealth, reputation, status symbols and methods of reasoning are not needed to attain knowledge of the divine and the world; what is necessary is a life of virtue and devotion. That is accessible to all, as long as they are prepared to bid farewell to the values that permeate secular society. Fine examples are, according to Chrysostom, the early followers of Christ: fishermen, tentmakers and tax collectors who, by virtue of their faith, were able to refute the elaborate doctrines of the philosophers.[62] Thus, right from the outset, Christianity had a strong desire for an equal society, in which knowledge and truth are not restricted to a small circle of initiated intellectuals.[63] That the superior wisdom is available to all is evidenced across Chrysostom's oeuvre, which provides a host of exemplars embodying *philosophia,* from the first Christians to male and female martyrs of the previous centuries to the contemporary rustic monks.[64] Christian wisdom spreads across all humanity, regardless of class distinctions or intellectual abilities.

To take this societal aspect one step further we should take a look at the impact of both pagan teaching and Christian philosophy. We already mentioned in passing that, while the Greeks fail to live up to their lofty ideals, simple followers of Jesus by their very life and work teach others how to become an irreproachable person. At first glance it might seem that the pagan thinkers had a substantial impact on society, as they lay claim to a high reputation and display with every facet of their outward appearance that they are recognised as

respectable and influential members of the civic community. With his scornful remarks and an eye for human frailty, Chrysostom lays bare the marginalisation and inanity of these figures. As the skirmishes between them show, they are primarily concerned with subtleties of logical reasoning, or rather with their own reputation.[65] Offering contradictory and ridiculous opinions on abstract matters,[66] the philosophers are far from convincing others, never mind changing the morals of their audience.[67] And when their own morals and habits are put under scrutiny, these caricatures of philosophy[68] are exposed as hypocrites who resemble actors on the stage, because they merely pretend to pursue serious occupations. Despite their ambitious principles, they are committed to a life of sensual pleasure, similar to dogs under the dinner table of the rich, which "do everything for the sake of the belly".[69]

An excellent opportunity to unmask the philosophers' idleness came during Lent of 387, when Antioch was virtually threatened with extinction by the emperor Theodosius I. After a number of citizens enraged by new tax regulations had thrown down images of the emperor and his family, the city was trapped in an existential crisis over several weeks, awaiting imperial punishment for the lese-majesty. During this period, while both secular and clerical representatives of Antioch tried to negotiate a settlement of the dispute, Chrysostom delivered a series of homilies to his congregation in order to amend the situation.[70] Significantly, he laid the blame for the riot squarely on the corrupted morals and sinful desires of his fellow citizens, without any patience with Christians among them. Since their habits—particularly their obsession with oath-swearing—had proved instrumental in the city's downfall, it was essential to bring about a fundamental change of values and behaviour. With great pleasure, the preacher savoured to the full the memory of how the philosophers in the moment of greatest affliction had deserted the citizens to save their own skin:[71]

> Where now are those who are clad in threadbare cloaks and display a long beard and carry staffs in the right hand; the philosophers of the world, who are more abject in disposition than the dogs under the table and do everything for

> the sake of the belly? All these men then forsook the city; they all hasted away and hid themselves in caves!

Instead of supporting the inhabitants in the face of death and offering consolation, the pagan intellectuals had nothing in mind except saving their necks. Egotistically, they joined the wealthy class in their precipitous flight to the mountains, where they hoped to escape punishment. This upsetting response to collective danger was another proof of the futility of quixotic academics that was so often derided in ancient anecdotes. In Chrysostom's view, the philosophers had forfeited their claim to public engagement once and for all.

With the monks, it was a completely different matter. At the same time as scores of affluent citizens were forsaking their fellows, one group set out on the reverse journey from the surrounding mountains to the city. That at least is what Chrysostom tells us in the same homily.[72]

> And the inhabitants of the city fled away to the mountains and to the deserts, but the citizens of the desert hastened into the city, demonstrating by deeds what, on the preceding days, I have not desisted from saying, that the very furnace will not be able to harm the man who leads a virtuous life. Such a thing is philosophy of soul, rising superior to all things and to all prosperous or adverse events; for neither is it enfeebled by the former nor beaten down and debased by the latter, but abides on the same level through the whole course of things, showing its own native force and power! Who, indeed, was not convicted of weakness by the difficulty of the present crisis? Those who had held the first offices in our city, who were in places of power, who were surrounded with immense wealth, and who were in high favour with the Emperor, leaving their houses utterly deserted, all consulted their own safety; and all friendship and kindred were found worthless, and those whom they formerly knew, at this season of calamity, they desired not to know and prayed

> to be unknown of them! But the monks, poor as they were, having nothing more than a mean garment, who had lived in the coarsest manner, who seemed formerly to be nobodies, men habituated to mountains and forests; as if they had been so many lions, with a great and lofty soul, whilst all were fearing and quaking, stood forth and relieved the danger, and that, not in the course of many days, but in a brief moment of time!

With the monks' intervention in the crisis Chrysostom's argument comes full circle. The only defence against all evils and dangers is Christian philosophy as epitomised in the monks' selfless endeavour. Even though they have no connection with the inhabitants of the city, they put their own lives on the line to rescue them, demonstrating by this act that they are actually their brothers. Paradoxically, the monks embody the true spirit of the city, the Christian city, that is, while the upper-class representatives of the classical polis forsake the civic community precisely when their action is needed. In the twinkling of an eye, as if their bare appearance was sufficient, the men from the countryside bring the dangerous situation to an end.[73] The passage highlights the transgressional nature of the monks' intervention, the entry of rural philosophy into the city, to argue that nothing other than this 'worldly asceticism' will secure the well-being of Antioch. To cut a long story short, the preacher sums up his lesson: "So great is the moral wisdom that was brought among men by Christ."[74] Though living a life of seclusion, the monks nevertheless bring their philosophy to fruition first and foremost in the care for others.

This theme runs as a thread through Chrysostom's descriptions of Christian wisdom. Elsewhere, when he sets out his views on the priesthood, he makes clear that public engagement of priests on behalf of others ranks above the undisturbed ascetic existence because it faces the greater challenges and proves beneficial not only for oneself.[75] Chrysostom's occasional dissatisfaction with the ascetics' withdrawal lays additional weight to the point that his aim is the formation of 'worldly ascetics', also embodied by Paul, rather

than the tranquillity of the desert. It is true that this kind of *philosophia* results in the perfection of one's individual life and eventually the salvation of the soul. The wise and virtuous believer will avoid anything that might distract him from this path, including theatre spectacles and cursing. The consummation of the true philosophy, though, manifests itself in the practice of charity in all its facets. That is why Chrysostom is keen to repeat the story of the monks' intervention during the series of services held in this period.[76] He wants the message embodied by the ascetics to take root and grow in the souls of his parishioners so the latter adopt the virtues of the former within the urban context. After the appalling boldness of some citizens has put the survival of the entire city at risk, a well-founded *parrhesia*, the frankness of speech before any authority and even before God, will maintain the welfare of the urban community forever.[77]

The reason why in the wake of the riot the preacher dwells so tenaciously on the monks' selfless assistance is not just that it affords him the chance of extolling the superiority of Christian figures over pagan leaders. It is particularly conducive to his argument because the monks can serve as living exemplars of his conception of wisdom.[78] What is essential for the unfading success of Christian philosophy is that there be a personal relationship between those who are already advanced and those who are still at the starting point of their moral progress and in need of advice.[79] The basic principle underlying Chrysostom's pedagogy is emulation or imitation: since morals and behaviour are centre stage and have brought about the demise of formal schooling, it is imperative to furnish the novices with suitable models of the Christian life. Since he wants to make the monastic life a guideline not only for monks, but for all Christians he stresses the close ties between the rural ascetics and the urban population.[80] That is also why Chrysostom repeatedly projects ascetic values onto Paul; by transferring the ascetic lifestyle to the Apostle he directs his flock back to the beginnings of the Church as a template for their conduct.[81] The ordinary believers need living models, in addition to Biblical characters of ancient times, in order to mould their souls according to the

religious virtues.[82] Thus the social dimension of *philosophia* is operational not only in the practice of virtue, especially charity, but already during the pedagogical process. In the end, Chrysostom intimates, Christian knowledge will contribute to creating a humane urban society, which is tied together by mutual acts of love and the community of 'teachers' and followers. In this sense, cities truly become cities through philosophy.

CONCLUSION

A number of Chrysostom's sermons, including baptismal instructions, Lenten admonitions and exegetic homilies, put forward a clear-cut and systematic distinction between two types of knowledge, strikingly couched in spatial terms. Associating Christian wisdom with the countryside and Greek philosophy with the cityscape, the preacher produces a fundamental dichotomy between the knowledge discourses that were competing for public attention at that time. Both paths promise to guide their adherents to the happy life; only Christian philosophy, however, delivers on its promises, because it offers superior insights, is consistent and persuasive and has a substantial impact on the individual as well as on society. The preacher contrasts his notion of philosophy with pagan intellectualism to furnish his congregation with a comprehensive alternative to *paideia*.

What Chrysostom has to say about the Christian attitude towards Hellenic erudition might at first seem fairly unoriginal because he rehearses arguments that had been made by the New Testament and apologetic writers such as Clement and Origen. And yet, he makes a meaningful contribution to the controversy in the context of an increasingly urban form of Christianity at the end of the fourth century. As he addresses an audience largely socialised in the city Chrysostom acknowledges the need to adapt to their expectations by reconnecting the debate on the superiority of Christian wisdom to the local context. In spatial terms, he transfers Christian *philosophia*, as embodied by monks, from the desert to the polis, where it

is utilised as a panacea for classical *paideia*, which had been valued as the hallmark of the Greek city.

While the rising ascetic movement in general discounted urban culture as irreconcilable with the true Christian life, it was Chrysostom's aim to make this ideal available to a larger number of people, ultimately to any believer. For him the monastic community, shaped after Biblical models, represents a perfectly equal society, an excellent antidote to the elitist vision of a society based on class and education. He therefore suggests ways in which the monastic life, or rather philosophy, can greatly influence and finally transform life in the city so that the classical polis is virtually turned into a monastery. That is why he, through the return of rural monks to the city, cuts across engrained ideas about city and countryside and blurs the boundaries between the two spheres that hitherto had been neatly separated.

The spatial dimension then is not incidental, but in fact vital to Chrysostom's critical engagement with *paideia*. For the sake of persuasiveness before an urban congregation he uses a shared mode of expression, the discourse on philosophy, to reveal Christianity as the true fulfilment of the goals of classical education. However, since the ideal of the Christian life is mainly located far from the Greek polis, Chrysostom needs to demonstrate that the gulf between the worldly life in the city and asceticism in the desert can be bridged. Only then can 'philosophy' overcome boundaries between high and low, between city and countryside.

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[1] Chrys. *hom.* 26.4 *in Rom*. (PG 60:644): διό, παρακαλῶ, τὴν φιλοσοφίαν τὴν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἐνταῦθα εἰσαγάγωμεν, ἵνα αἱ πόλεις γένωνται πόλεις· ταῦτα τὸν Ἕλληνα ὀρθῶσαι δύναται, ταῦτα ἀπαλλάξαι μυρίων σκανδάλων.

[2] See, for instance, Michael Fiedrowicz, *Apologie im frühen Christentum: Die Kontroverse um den christlichen Wahrheitsanspruch in den ersten Jahrhunderten,* 3rd ed. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 151–54, 243–74, Sébastien Morlet, *Christianisme et philosophie: Les premieres confrontations (I^er^–VI^e^ siècle)* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2014), Johanna Tloka, *Griechische Christen – Christliche Griechen: Plausibilisierungsstrategien des antiken Christentums bei Origenes und Johannes Chrysostomos,* Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), who compares Origen's and Chrysostom's attitudes towards classical education, and Jan R. Stenger, "Athens and/or Jerusalem? Basil's and Chrysostom's Views on the Didactic Use of Literature and Stories," in *Education and Religion in Late Antiquity: Genres and Discourses in Transition*, ed. Peter Van Nuffelen, Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Gemeinhardt (Farnham: Ashgate, forthcoming) on Basil's and Chrysostom's engagement with classical literature.

[3] See Clement, *Paedagogus* and Origen, *On First Principles* and *Against Celsus*.

[4] David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 145–61 on Athanasius's ascetic politics against 'academic' Christianity in Origen's tradition, and the use of the uneducated Antony as role model for Christians (ibid. 213–14 and 253–58). Chrysostom, whose turn from intellectual spirituality to a more ethical stance is similar to Athanasius's agenda, is familiar with Athanasius's account of Antony's life, as *hom*. 8.5 *in Mt*. shows (PG 57:89).

[5] Johanna Tloka, "Die christliche πόλις bei Johannes Chrysostomos: Leitbild und Identifikationsfiguren," in *Formen und Funktionen von Leitbildern,* ed. J. Hahn and M. Vielberg, Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium 17 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007), 163–76 in her discussion of Chrysostom's attempt to Christianise the polis does not deal with the role of philosophy.

[6] Chrys. *kal*. 3 (PG 48:956): τὸ παρατηρεῖν ἡμέρας οὐ Χριστιανικῆς φιλοσοφίας, ἀλλ᾽ Ἑλληνικῆς πλάνης ἐστίν ("to observe the days of the calendar does not belong to Christian philosophy, but to Hellenic error").

[7] Chrys. *kal*. 3–4 (PG 48:956–58).

[8] Cf. Heinrich Schmidinger, "Philosophie, christliche," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie,* vol. 7 (Basel and Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1989), 886–98, here 886.

[9] Thomas E. Ameringer, *The Stylistic Influence of the Second Sophistic on the Panegyrical Sermons of St. John Chrysostom: A Study in Greek Rhetoric* (diss. Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1921).

[10] Arnold Stötzel, *Kirche als 'neue Gesellschaft': Die humanisierende Wirkung des Christentums nach Johannes Chrysostomus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984); Giovanni Viansino, "Aspetti dell'opera di Giovanni Crisostomo," *Koinonia* 25 (2001): 137–205; Raymond Laird, *Mindset, Moral Choice and Sin in the Anthropology of John Chrysostom* (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls, 2012). Paul R. Coleman-Norton, "St. Chrysostom and the Greek Philosophers," *CP* 25.4 (1930): 305–17 merely presents a catalogue of passages where Chrysostom criticises philosophers, with some comments.

[11] Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 242–44.

[12] Laird, *Mindset*, 157 and *passim*; David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[13] Christine Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places: Late Antique Antioch and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2014), 143. She draws attention to the central place of wisdom in Chrysostom's discussion of the rural-urban relationship (ibid. 142–44). Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 169–70 also discusses Chrysostom's contrasting of city and countryside in his depiction of asceticism.

[14] His life and background are discussed by Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); John H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Clerics between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[15] On this debated topic see Pierre-Louis Malosse, "Jean Chrysostome a-t-il été l'élève de Libanios?," *Phoenix* 62 (2008): 273–80.

[16] This image of John's early formation is based on Palladius's *Dialogue*, according to which the stay in the mountains lasted for six years (Pall. *v. Chrys*. 5). Cf. Manfred Lochbrunner, *Über das Priestertum: Historische und systematische Untersuchung zum Priesterbild des Johannes Chrysostomus,* Hereditas 5 (Bonn: Borengässer, 1993), 80–82. The reliability of Palladius's account has been contested by Martin Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus und das antiochenisch-syrische Mönchtum: Studien zu Theologie, Rhetorik und Kirchenpolitik im antiochenischen Schrifttum des Johannes Chrysostomus* (Zurich: Pano, 2000), 95–105, who argues that the idea that Chrysostom withdrew from the city for a number of years to live a life in ascetic seclusion is largely a retrospective construction. Illert proposes that Chrysostom's Christian socialisation was on the contrary urban, an intra-urban form of asceticism different from the Egyptian model that is the background of Palladius's account. The historical value of the *Dialogue* has also been called into question by Wendy Mayer, "What Does It Mean To Say That John Chrysostom Was a Monk?," *SP* 41 (2006): 451–55, while Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John*, 119 and 130–31 dismisses Illert's reading. Recently, Adolf Martin Ritter, *Studia Chrysostomica: Aufsätze zu Weg, Werk und Wirkung des Johannes Chrysostomus (ca. 349–407),* Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 71 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 56–66 has again defended Palladius's reliability against Illert's and Mayer's doubts.

[17] Chrysostom abandoned the urban life in 375, to spend the following six years as a monk in the mountains. The damage done to his health by his extreme asceticism impelled him to return to the city, where he was eventually ordained priest in 386. See Mayer and Allen, *John Chrysostom*, 4–7; Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John*, 126–32. For the impact of Chrysostom's upbringing and training on his life and works see also Laird, *Mindset*, 16–17, 135–39.

[18] See Lochbrunner, *Über das Priestertum*; Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus*. André Jean Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne: Libanius, Chrysostome et les moines de Syrie* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1959), 329–46 is still useful on Chrysostom's depiction of monasticism.

[19] Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 145–58; Cornelia B. Horn and John W. Martens, *"Let the Little Children Come to Me": Childhood and Children in Early Christianity* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press, 2009), 149–61; Jan R. Stenger, "The Soul and the City: John Chrysostom's Modelling of Urban Space," in *Cityscaping: Constructing and Modelling Images of the City*, ed. T. Fuhrer, F. Mundt and J. R. Stenger, Philologus Suppl. 3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 133–53.

[20] Arist. *EE* 1217b, *EN* 1102a etc.

[21] Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 36, where, during the trading of philosophical lifestyles, the god Hermes tells an "exoteric" Peripatetic from an "esoteric" one. Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 334–35.

[22] Clem. *str.* 5.58.3–4; Hipp. *haer.* 1.2.4.

[23] Mark 4:11. Ilona Opelt, "Griechische und lateinische Bezeichnungen der Nichtchristen: Ein terminologischer Versuch," *VC* 19 (1965): 1–22.

[24] See Michele R. Salzman, "Pagans and Christians," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*., ed. S. A. Harvey and D. G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 186–202 on Christian and pagan identities.

[25] Chrys. *oppugn*. 3.11 (PG 47:367); 3.12 (PG 47:370); *Thdr*. 2.1; *catech*. 8.5; *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:173); *hom*. 63.3 *in Jo*. (PG 59:352) etc. In general, for Chrysostom 'external' is all that belongs to the secular sphere and the needs of the human body, as opposed to Christian faith and the soul.

[26] Occasionally, though, great thinkers such as Pythagoras and Plato make an appearance in Chrysostom's oeuvre, for instance, in *hom*. 33.4 *in Mt*. (PG 57:392); *hom*. 2.1 *in Jo*. (PG 59:30–31); *hom*. 6.6 *in 1 Cor*. (PG 61:62). For his knowledge and use of Plato see Rudolf Brändle, "Johannes Chrysostomus I," in *RAC* 18 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1998), 426–503, here 455–56.

[27] One of the most impressive examples is the scathing and sarcastic attack on Greek philosophers in *hom*. 2.1–2 *in Jo*. (PG 59:30–32).

[28] Gerard J. M. Bartelink, "'Philosophie' et 'philosophe' dans quelques œuvres de Jean Chrysostome," *RAM* 36 (1960): 486–92; Anne-Marie Malingrey, *"Philosophia": Étude d'un groupe de mots dans la littérature grecque, des Présocratiques au IVe siècle après J.C.* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1961); Schmidinger, *Philosophie*; Antonio Cioffi, "Giovanni Crisostomo e il 'vero' filosofo," in *Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e occidente tra IV e V secolo* (Rome: Inst. Patristicum Augustinianum, 2005), 513–20.

[29] Chrys. *hom*. 63.3 *in Jo*. (PG 59:352); *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:173). Coleman-Norton, *St. Chrysostom*, and Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 40 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 274–75 on Chrysostom's depiction of the Greek philosophers.

[30] Chrys. *hom*. 63.3 *in Jo*. (PG 59:352).

[31] Alternatives to *hemetera philosophia* are *kath' hemas philosophia* and *par' hemin philosophia*; see Chrys. *oppugn*. 1.2 (PG 47:320); *stat*. 21.4 (PG 49:220); *hom*. 63.1 *in Jo*. (PG 59:349); *kal*. 4 (PG 48:959). Another expression is "heavenly philosophy" (*ouranios philosophia*), *oppugn*. 3.18 (PG 47:380); further, philosophy "according to God", *stat*. 18.4 (PG 49:186). Likewise, Chrysostom simply refers to "philosophy", indicating Christian conduct, if the opposition to pagan philosophy is not relevant to the argument. He also speaks of "the real education" (*ontos paideusis*), e.g. at *oppugn*. 3.12 (PG 47:368). Further references in Bartelink, "Philosophie." Jean-Louis Quantin, "A propos de la traduction de *philosophia* dans l'*Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* de Saint Jean Chrysostome," *RevSR* 56 (1987): 187–97 discusses in detail the use of *philosophia*, with and without qualifying attributes, as a persuasive strategy in Chrysostom's *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life*. See also Morlet, *Christianisme*, 97–101 on Christianity as true philosophy in Christian apologetics.

[32] Chrys. *catech*. 8, delivered in Antioch at some point between 389 and 397 (Reiner Kaczynski (ed.), *Johannes Chrysostomus, Catecheses baptismales: Taufkatechesen*, 2 vols., Fontes Christiani 6.1–2 (Freiburg/Brsg.: Herder, 1992), 43–45). The homily belongs to a series of baptismal instructions and is addressed to a mixed audience of the newly baptised and others who had received baptism before. The identity of the people mentioned in the passage has not been established securely. Paul W. Harkins, *St. John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions, Translated and Annotated*, Ancient Christian Writers 31 (Westminster, MD and London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1963), 280–82, Frans van de Paverd, *St. John Chrysostom, The Homilies on the Statues: An Introduction*, OCA 239 (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1991), 260–89, and Kaczynski, *Catecheses baptismales*, 466–67, consider them monks or monks who had been ordained priests. See also Jaclyn L. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and His*

Congregation in Antioch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 78–79. In any case, as the passage makes clear, they were not identical with the monks in Antioch's neighbourhood.

[33] Chrys. *catech*. 8.1–2. The translation is adapted from Harkins, *Baptismal Instructions*, 119–20. Similar remarks on the unimportance of a barbarian tongue when compared to a sound mind occur in *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:188) and *pan. mart*. 1.1 (PG 50:646).

[34] Chrys. *catech*. 8.6: "Here you see this simple rustic who knows nothing but farming and tilling the earth. Yet he takes no heed of the present life, but sends his thoughts winging to the good things that lie stored up in heaven, and he knows how to be wise about those ineffable blessings. He has exact knowledge of things which the philosophers who take pride in their beard and staff have never even been able to imagine."

[35] Chrys. *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:173–74); *hom*. 5 *in Tit*. (PG 62:694); *virg*. (PG 48:537).

[36] E.g. Luc. *DMort.* 20 (Charon and Hermes). See Ronald Dietrich, *Der Gelehrte in der Literatur: Literarische Perspektiven zur Ausdifferenzierung des Wissenschaftssystems* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003). For the cloak as a symbol of the philosopher's simple lifestyle see, for instance, Pl. *Prt.* 335d, D. L. 2.28, 6.22, 6.91, Philostr. *VA* 2.40. The caricature of the false philosophers who reduce philosophy to ostentation has a place also in the feud between rhetoric and philosophy. See Quint. *inst*. 1, pr. 14–15. In Christian authors, e.g. Hier. *ep*. 107.5 (CSEL 55:295–96), the gloomy face and sordid clothes become the signs of the serious ascetic.

[37] The connection between pagan philosophers and *phantasia* is also made in *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:189). The term *phantasia* is central to Chrysostom's dislike for the urban sphere and its flaws. See Chrys. *oppugn*. 1.18 (PG 47:339); *stat*. 2.5 (PG 49:40) etc. The most vivid account of this misguided behaviour is given in the opening passage of *educ. lib*., where Chrysostom

denounces the elite's quest for reputation and its perception by the community. See Stenger, "Soul and the City."

[38] Chrys. *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:173–74); *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:188–89). A similar technique is to set Greek philosophy against the rural origins of Christian wisdom, e.g. in *hom*. 2.1 *in Jo*. (PG 59:30).

[39] Chrys. *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:188–89).

[40] See Tloka, "Christliche πόλις," on Chrysostom's idealised image of the ascetics as a means of transforming the urban value system.

[41] Chrys. *oppugn*. As he came to recognise that this was hardly a feasible solution he refrained from persuading every young Christian of the monastic life and adopted a more realistic strategy, namely transferring essential ascetic virtues to the daily life of Christian citizens, for instance in *educ. lib*. 19. In one of the homilies on Matthew, Chrysostom characterises the wilderness and the mountains where the monks dwell as the "city of virtue" (*hom*. 72.3 *in Mt*., PG 58:671). Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus*; Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 172–73; Maxwell, *Christianization*, 129–33. See now also Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places*, for the significance, and manipulation, of physical places in Chrysostom's preaching.

[42] Likewise, pagan authors in late antiquity discussed whether the involvement in urban life or the solitude of the countryside was more conducive to attaining philosophical perfection. See, for instance, Eun. *VS* 6.4.

[43] Chrys. *stat*. 19.1–2 (PG 49:188–90).

[44] Van de Paverd, *Homilies on the Statues*; Dorothea R. French, "Rhetoric and the Rebellion of A.D. 387 in Antioch," *Hist* 47.4 (1998): 468–84; Mayer and Allen, *John Chrysostom*, 7, 12. For the significance of the urban-rural divide in the *Homilies of the Statues* see Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places*, 147–62.

[45] Chrys. *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:188–89). The translation is adapted from Philip Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom, On the Priesthood, Ascetic Treatises, Select Homilies and Letters, Homilies on the Statues,* NPNF 1.9 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1889), 464–65.

[46] See Stötzel, *Kirche als 'neue Gesellschaft'*, 160–68, who discusses how Chrysostom, similarly to the Epicureans and Cynics, propagates the simple and self-sufficient life as a solution to the problem of man's dependence on external conditions.

[47] The adjective *agroikos* and its derivatives mostly carry the connotations 'boorish' or 'rude'. Henry G. Liddell, Robert Scott and Henry S. Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon,* ninth ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15.

[48] See Gen 2:15.

[49] Chrys. *catech*. 8.4. Also in *stat*. 18.4 (PG 49:186). See Andreas Heiser, *Die Paulusinszenierung des Johannes Chrysostomus: Epitheta und ihre Vorgeschichte*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 70 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 538–39.

[50] Chrys. *hom*. 63.3 *in Jo*. (PG 59:352). Translation after Philip Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews,* NPNF 1.14 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1889), 234.

[51] Cf. Chrys. *hom*. 2.3 *in Jo*. (PG 59:32) on St John's teachings.

[52] See Chrys. *hom. in 1 Cor*. 3.4 (PG 61:127) and *laud. Paul*. 4.17. Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom*, 157–93 shows that Chrysostom depicts Paul as the most accomplished imitator of God's adaptable method of teaching. See also Heiser, *Paulusinszenierung*, 257.

[53] Chrys. *catech*. 8.3. As to the contrast to pagan philosophy, see also *hom*. 63.1 *in Jo*. (PG 59:349): "A great good is philosophy, the philosophy I mean which is with us. For what the pagans have is words and fables only; nor have these fables anything philosophical in them." (translated by Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom, Homilies on the Gospel of John,* 232).

[54] Chrys. *catech*. 8.2, with Matt 5:19. The paramount importance of practice and conduct is also highlighted in *hom*. 72.4 *in Mt*. (PG 59:352), where Chrysostom posits that correct belief is of no use if not accompanied by a virtuous life.

[55] Chrys. *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:188–90), sometimes also cited with the title *Epul. ss. mart*. (translation by Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom, On the Priesthood*, 465). Van de Paverd, *Homilies on the Statues*, 241–46 shows that the homily belongs to the series *De statuis*. The passage throughout contrasts "our" Christian philosophy with philosophy and erudition (*paideusis*) "outside" (*exothen*) and links this theme with the fate of the city. The recurring spatial metaphors suggest that pagan education is detached from the city dwellers, while in fact Christian philosophy, despite its rural ancestry, extends to the polis.

[56] In *hom*. 5.6 *in 1 Cor*. (PG 61:47) Chrysostom affirms that earning your daily bread through labour is a kind of philosophy. Similarly, in *Against the Opponents* the monks are linked through the term *philosophia* with a venerable cultural tradition. Cf. Quantin, "A propos de la traduction," 196.

[57] Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom*, 163.

[58] This fact is acknowledged by Chrysostom himself, e.g. in *hom*. 2.1 *in Jo*. (PG 59:30). For an overview of the social setting of higher education in late antiquity see Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 5–21.

[59] Chrys. *educ. lib*. 38. However, he makes the concession that the sons of the upper class are likely to enter such professions, but only after a thoroughly religious upbringing (ibid. 81; 84; 89). In *oppugn*. 3.11 (PG 47:367) he shies away from completely dismissing the established schools.

[60] Chrys. *hom*. 72.2–3 *in Mt*. (PG 58:669–71). In this passage he expounds Matt 23:8 ("But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.") to reject any arrogation of human teaching authority.

[61] See Chrys. *hom*. 72.4 *in Mt*. (PG 58:672): agriculture, labour with your own hands, simple food, and life according to nature.

[62] Chrys. *stat*. 19.2 (PG 49:190); *hom*. 2.2 *in Jo*. (PG 59:31).

[63] Chrysostom paints a romanticising picture of the egalitarian and inclusive society as realised among the hard-working monks in *hom*. 72.3–4 *in Mt*. (PG 58:671–72). On Chrysostom's social vision see Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom on Poverty," in *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities*, ed. Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil and Wendy Mayer (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2009), 69–118.

[64] For Chrysostom's use of exemplars in ethical teaching and exegesis see Mitchell, *Heavenly Trumpet*, 49–55 and *passim*, Heiser, *Paulusinszenierung*, 544–55 and Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom*, 268–69.

[65] Cf. Chrys. *hom*. 63.1 *in Jo*. (PG 59:349): "Everything among those men [the pagan philosophers] is done for the sake of reputation."

[66] The inconsistency and ridiculousness of pagan philosophy is relentlessly exposed in *hom*. 2.2 *in Jo*. (PG 59:31).

[67] See also *stat*. 19.2 (PG 49:190): "Let the Gentiles then be ashamed, let them hide their heads, and slink away on account of their philosophers, and their wisdom, wretched as it is beyond all folly! For the philosophers that have been amongst them in their lifetime have hardly been able to teach their doctrines to a very few, who can easily be numbered; and when any trifling peril overtook them, they lost even these."

[68] The term 'caricature' is particularly apt as Chrysostom elsewhere relishes tearing to shreds the philosopher Pythagoras, who had allegedly conversed with oxen and eagles, yet to no avail (*hom*. 2.2 *in Jo*., PG 59:32). The ridiculous representatives of Greek philosophy are opposed to the effective teaching of the simple fisherman John the Apostle: "But not so the words of him who was ignorant and unlettered; for Syrians, and Egyptians, and Indians, and

Persians, and Ethiopians, and ten thousand other nations, translating into their own tongues the doctrines introduced by him, barbarians though they be, have learned to philosophise."

[69] Chrys. *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:173–74). This is evidently an allusion to the Cynic philosophers.

[70] The uprising took place at the end of February 387. For a reconstruction of the events and the chronological sequence of the homilies see van de Paverd, *Homilies on the Statues*. Further French, "Rhetoric and the Rebellion."

[71] Chrys. *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:173–74; translated by Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom, On the Priesthood*, 454). This homily dates to 27 March 387 and focuses on the courageous intervention of the monks on the day of the trial of the city's decurions.

[72] Chrys. *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:174; translated by Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom, On the Priesthood*, 454). See the discussion by Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places*, 147–54, who focuses on the transformative power of topographical transgressions, but does not consider the monks' functions as role models. See Tloka, "Christliche πόλις," on Chrysostom's pedagogic use of role models in the urban context.

[73] See also the similar description in *stat*. 18.4 (PG 49:186), with emphasis on wisdom 'from above' and the tranquillity of the Christian sage.

[74] It is not by chance that, with regard to the blameless life of the monks from the desert, Chrysostom repeatedly employs the terms "proof", "corroborate" and "demonstrate", simultaneously drawing on the discourse of logic and indicating that the practice of virtue operates in place of logical reasoning (*catech*. 8.6; *stat*. 18.4, PG 49:186; *stat*. 19.1, PG 49:189).

[75] Chrys. *sac*. 6.5–8, further *hom*. 72.4 *in Mt*. See Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom*, 203. For Chrysostom's ambivalent stance on the monks' solitude see Lochbrunner, *Über das Priestertum*, 84–90 and Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 171.

[76] The monks' endeavour figures prominently in *stat*. 17, 18 and 19, delivered on 27 and 28 March and 7 April 387 respectively. Van de Paverd, *Homilies on the Statues*, 363–64.

[77] The legitimate boldness of both monks and the bishop in the course of the events is a key theme of *stat*. 17; see, for instance, PG 49:174–75, contrasted with the ineffective *parrhesia* of the educated elite. In *stat*. 3, we see bishop Flavian by virtue of his *parrhesia* conversing with the emperor Theodosius on equal terms or even as his senior (PG 49:50). Cf. Gerard J. M. Bartelink, "*Parrhesia* dans les œuvres de Jean Chrysostome," *SP* 16 (1985): 441–48; Gerard J. M. Bartelink, "Die *Parrhesia* des Menschen vor Gott bei Johannes Chrysostomus," *VC* 51 (1997): 261–72.

[78] This point is given prominence in *hom*. 72.4 *in Mt*. (PG 58:672–73). Occasionally, Chrysostom also holds up pagan individuals and philosophers as models of good behaviour, in order to shame his congregation for their flaws (*hom*. 62.4 *in Jo*., PG 59:347).

[79] Chrysostom underlines this point by laying stress on the monks being brothers and the bond between the bishop and the flock. See *stat*. 19.1 (PG 49:188); *catech*. 8.2.

[80] See Tloka, *Griechische Christen*, 169, Heiser, *Paulusinszenierung*, 293 and Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom*, 219 regarding the ascetic life as the ideal for ordinary Christians.

[81] Heiser, *Paulusinszenierung*, 527–54 argues that Chrysostom presents Paul in ascetic terms to modify the existing ascetic practice.

[82] The parallel function of the monks and Biblical characters is highlighted in *stat*. 17.2 (PG 49:177), where Chrysostom is presenting Abraham as an ascetic of the desert in all but name. Abraham, as Demetrios E. Tonias, *Abraham in the Works of John Chrysostom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014) argues, features prominently in Chrysostom's homilies as a model of Christian virtue and counterpart to the Stoic sage. The patriarch is portrayed as a model ascetic whose lack of formal education is turned into a virtue by Chrysostom (ibid. 55–56 and 94–96).